

**Questions from Chairman Gerald E. Connolly**

**1. How might the FITARA Scorecard evolve to be a more useful tool for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Congress?**

The FITARA scorecard is an extremely helpful tool for supporting OPM’s effort to modernize its legacy applications. The Subcommittee could consider modified or new metrics to assess the implementation of modern security practices, the use of cloud technologies, modern IT software, and the use of effective IT portfolio practices such as the implementation of Technology Business Management.

**2. In May 2021, President Biden issued Executive Order 14028, “Ensuring the Nation’s Cybersecurity,” requiring that agencies adopt best practices for secure cloud services, zero trust architecture, and multifactor authentication and encryption. On January 26, 2022, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a zero-trust architecture strategy, which set specific cybersecurity requirements and deadlines for federal agencies. What progress has OPM made in implementing the requirements of this executive order and the OMB strategy that followed?**

Prior to the release of Executive Order 14028, OPM had already established a Zero Trust Governance Team (ZTGT) to develop the strategies and to manage the execution of OPM’s Zero Trust initiatives. Based on our strategy, OPM pursued and was awarded \$9.9 million from the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) to support our Zero Trust initiative. OPM intends to achieve Optimal Zero Trust Maturity by December 31, 2024. We intend to achieve optimal maturity through self-attestation against the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s Zero Trust Maturity Model. We also expect to meet the Federal zero trust architecture (ZTA) strategy outlined in Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-22-09 with phased improvements in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

By implementing Zero Trust, we will significantly enhance and transform our cybersecurity posture and improve our security protocols. Zero Trust, combined with our cloud modernization strategy, will provide improved cybersecurity capabilities while simultaneously positioning OPM for further IT modernization.

**3. How should the FITARA Scorecard incorporate key tenets of this executive order, including the adoption of secure cloud services, zero trust architecture, and multifactor authentication?**

The Subcommittee could consider modifying the FITARA scorecard to use the key tenets of the executive order to increase agencies’ accountability regarding modern security practices, the use of cloud technologies, and modern IT software.

**4. Should the FITARA Scorecard more closely align with OPM’s internal cybersecurity metrics to avoid redundancy? If so, in what way?**

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If the Subcommittee were to accept a recommendation to more closely align the FITARA Scorecard with OPM's internal cybersecurity metrics, the Subcommittee could consider advancing (or producing) a public scorecard and a scorecard that is not released to the public. The private FITARA scorecard could more closely align with agencies' internal cybersecurity metrics and would provide a deeper level of reporting.

- 5. In September 2021, OPM's Office of Inspector General found that OPM had yet to develop an IT modernization strategy per its 2018 recommendation. What progress has OPM made towards developing an IT modernization strategy with clear objectives and goals toward the retirement of legacy IT systems?**

OPM is updating the agency strategic plan as required by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. It is important that we align the IT Strategic Plan with the overall agency strategic plan, so we are developing an updated FY 2022 - 2025 IT Strategic Plan, with a target completion date of FY 2022 Quarter 4. The IT Strategic Plan will emphasize OPM's goals and objectives, focusing on IT modernization, cloud technology, cybersecurity, and maximizing the customers' experience.

While developing the updated IT Strategic Plan for FY 2021 – 2022, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) developed and issued a vision statement, guiding principles, and leadership commitments. Those tenets will guide the organization until the new IT Strategic Plan is released.

The IT modernization strategy should align, in some capacities, with each Federal Agency's technology mission to ensure continuity, uniformity, and achieving Federal IT Goals. Instruction from the Federal Chief Information Officer would possibly lead this effort. Both the IT Modernization Plan and the IT Strategic Plan should holistically be implemented from within the Federal IT components that are designed to create IT policies due to specific levels of understanding, concepts, and other important factors.

- 6. Consolidating and optimizing data centers and moving to the cloud results in savings and more efficient and nimbler IT. What new FITARA Scorecard metrics might empower and incentivize chief information officers to move to the cloud?**

OPM is strongly committed to eliminating on-premises data centers and migrating to the cloud. The Subcommittee could consider the use of cloud technologies, modern IT software, and the use of effective IT portfolio practices such as the implementation of Technology Business Management to empower and incentivize the move to the cloud.

- 7. The FITARA Scorecard grades agencies on their progress towards transitioning away from the General Service Administration's (GSA) outdated and soon-to-be-retired Networkx telecommunications contract to GSA's Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) program. In particular, the FITARA 13.0 Scorecard grades against GSA's goal of having 90% of telecom inventory transitioned by March 2022. OPM has an "F" in this category, meaning less than 54% of its telecom inventory is on EIS. Please explain OPM's grade in this category, along with the steps the Department will take to prioritize the transition. What steps will OPM take to ensure that the transition to EIS catalyzes improved agency operations and service and is not simply a check the box exercise?**

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On April 18, 2021, OPM awarded a new Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) contract to transition off Networx. The contract award date lowered our FITARA score. However, we have prioritized the EIS transition and are transitioning older technology phone systems using our enterprise collaboration platform. We are transitioning data links onto the new support contract and are identifying and disconnecting old connections. In the short time since I testified, we have already moved over 25% of our network circuits and phone lines off Networx. We are on track to complete the deployment in FY 2022.

**8. To rebuild trust with the public, the federal government must prioritize customer experience, and so the FITARA Scorecard should, too. What data would help build momentum for adopting customer-centric processes at OPM?**

The OPM citizen-facing services and those services for the Federal workforce, USAJOBS and Retirement Services are designated as High-Impact Service providers (HISPs). This designation requires continual and pervasive monitoring of customer experience through surveys, focus groups, and user studies. These data are used to inform and prioritize service improvements, testing these with key constituents throughout their implementation.

Furthermore, in the draft FY 2022 – 2026 OPM Strategic Plan, we have identified one of the four primary goals – Goal 3: Create a human-centered customer experience by putting the needs of OPM’s customers at the center of OPM’s workforce services, policy, and oversight, increasing OPM’s customer satisfaction index score. OPM has commissioned cross-functional work across the objectives of Goal 3 to improve the consistency in customer experiences throughout OPM guidance, information, interactions, and services. We plan to integrate guidance and initiatives on customer experience data gathering consistent with the President’s Executive Order 14058, on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government, as well as Priority 2 of the President’s Management Agenda to deliver excellent, equitable, and secure Federal services and customer experience.

**9. In September 2021, OPM was awarded more than \$9 million from the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) to accelerate the agency’s adoption of a zero-trust cybersecurity architecture strategy. According to the TMF website, an initial transfer of \$5 million is in process. Has the TMF program management office provided you with a timeline on when you can expect to receive your funds?**

Yes, OPM worked with the General Services Administration TMF Program Management Office, Treasury, and OMB to implement the process for this initial transfer. We received the funds in February 2022.

**10. Based on your experience, do you have recommendations on improving the overall TMF request and award process, including the transfer of funds post-award?**

We are appreciative of the opportunity to request funding from the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF). The TMF will assist us with our IT modernization efforts. We will continually assess our IT modernization needs and determine how the TMF would be useful in accomplishing

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specific IT modernization efforts. I would like to recognize the tremendous effort GSA has put towards scaling the TMF to handle the money Congress has allocated to these critical modernization efforts. I believe that the improvements they have made to the process will show significant modernization wins over the years to come. I believe it would be beneficial to authorize transfer authority of Information Technology Working Capital Funds in the appropriations bills for each Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act agency who has been requesting such authority. This would allow greater flexibility in IT modernization funding, including the fast transfer of funds once a TMF proposal is approved.

**Questions from Rep. Jody Hice**

- 1. With the Biden Administration’s shift towards expanded telework for federal employees, I have been interested in assessing the impact of telework on agency performance. In 2016, GAO made several recommendations with respect to OPM’s Enterprise Human Resources Integration system around improving telework data. Please explain whether OPM has implemented those recommendations and how accurately OPM is currently able to track telework in the federal workforce.**

OPM currently has two different sources of telework data. One source is data contained within Enterprise Human Resources Integration system’s (EHRI) Payroll database, while the other is information obtained by OPM’s Employee Services through its annual data call with agencies. When comparing the two sources, there are clear discrepancies that OPM is working to resolve. In terms of accuracy, OPM believes that the data obtained from the annual data call is accurate, and thus OPM feels it can accurately report on telework across the government, but only on an annual basis. OPM would not be able to accurately track telework data on a per-pay period basis due to the current lack of data quality within the EHRI Payroll database.

OPM is making improvements to its EHRI Payroll database, including telework data, and is evaluating the resources needed to develop and execute a plan to address the full set of issues the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified. OPM has developed new payroll edits for implementation into the EHRI database to improve tracking of routine and situational telework and will develop additional quality assurance procedures in the future. OPM also conducted an accuracy-focused data-call with agencies through its Employee Services organization to improve the accuracy of agency telework data. To assess the quality of the telework data within EHRI, OPM program offices are evaluating agency submissions and are discussing with agencies any discrepancies for the purpose of quality improvement of the data submitted through EHRI. It is a joint effort between agencies and OPM -- agency employees need to accurately record telework occurrences through their Time & Attendance systems, shared service providers must process it and submit it to OPM through EHRI in a timely manner, and OPM needs to further improve its ability to flag anomalies and engage agencies and payroll providers in resolving them.

- 2. As we are all aware, OPM experienced one of the most high-profile data breaches in the history of the federal government in 2015. Six years later, OPM has only improved its overall agency cyber security maturity posture to a “2” out of a 5-point scale. Over the life of the FITARA scorecard, OPM’s FISMA grade has never been higher than a “C,” which is where it currently stands. OPM has enough on its plate maintaining sensitive data for current and former federal employees. Yet it is one of the few agencies that directly competes with the private sector to provide services to federal customers – in this instance in the talent acquisition/hiring space.**
  - a. Why should OPM be looking to expand the amount of sensitive data it must protect when its security posture is still very much a work in progress?**

OPM’s mission is best accomplished when data is used as the basis to make policy decisions.

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We believe it is a core tenet of effective human capital policy and one of the best modern practices. We have centralized the management of this data within OPM. We cannot ignore the need to collect and analyze data as we seek to improve the policy and operations of the civil service. We also recognize the need to balance the benefit against the risk of collecting data. Cybersecurity is a top priority for OPM, and we are moving to cloud technology, which provides us the opportunity to improve our security posture. We have also been approved to move to Zero Trust, which will improve and advance our data protection methods.

**b. Does OPM believe it should be held to a more lenient security standard than the private sector vendors in the exact same portion of the federal marketplace?**

OPM does not believe it is, or should be, held to a more lenient security standard. As technology evolves, OPM will continually evaluate its standards to determine whether modifications are necessary based on known and perceived threats. As new best practices emerge, OPM will evaluate and incorporate them into our security posture.

**c. Do federal agencies know this is the case when they sign interagency agreements for OPM to provide services?**

The OPM Talent Acquisition Systems have extensive security safeguards and a rigorous continuous monitoring program in place to protect the information systems and data. Customer agency Information System Security Officers routinely review the security assessment and authorization package and privacy documentation, as part of their own organization assessment of risk.

**3. As part of the EIS Program, agencies are expected to transition their telecommunications contracts by May 2023. However, the December 2021 FITARA Scorecard notes that 11 federal agencies are not expected to meet an interim September 2022 milestone, and in fact 15 agencies failed to meet the March 2022 milestone identified in the Scorecard. OPM is one of the 15 agencies.**

**a. Could you please explain the reason for OPM's failure to meet the transition deadline so far and what actions OPM is currently taking to meet future deadlines?**

On April 18, 2021, OPM awarded a new Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) contract to transition off Networkx. The late contract award date lowered our FITARA score. We have prioritized the EIS transition and are transitioning older technology phone systems using our enterprise collaboration platform. We are transitioning data links onto the new support contract and are identifying and disconnecting old connections. In the short time since I testified to the Subcommittee, we have already moved over 25% of our network circuits and phone lines from Networkx. We are on track to complete the deployment in FY 2022.

**b. How confident are you that OPM will meet the ultimate May 2023 deadline?**

We are confident that we will complete the migration within the General Services Administration's (GSA) target completion date.

**4. Can you describe the burden placed on your agency due to the semiannual FITARA cadence? Does this frequency impact the accuracy of the picture presented to the Subcommittee of your agency's IT posture?**

Over the past year, we have made significant progress using FITARA to guide and prioritize our IT modernization initiatives and to improve the customer's experience for Federal employees, retirees and their families, along with other Federal agencies and our citizens. We will continue to comply with its reporting requirements and cadence.

The frequency does not materially impact the accuracy of the picture presented. Yet, more complicated scorecard items may be better measured annually to give agencies an opportunity to make progress on the measure.

**5. FITARA requires OMB to develop and most agencies to review agency IT investment portfolios to increase efficiency and effectiveness and identify potential waste and duplication. In this Scorecard metric, OPM scored an 'A' with the highest score of all the agencies. Please explain how the cost and savings are calculated, and how that money is repurposed, or in other words, what happens to these "significant cost savings" (using the vernacular of the Scorecard)?**

We have successfully completed multiple IT initiatives that have led to cost savings. These include:

- Closing a Data Center and reducing our Data Center needs.
- Consolidating from six separate collaboration solutions to one enterprise solution, thereby eliminating duplicative costs for similar tools.
- In addition to the consolidation of collaboration tools, we are also reducing the number of duplicative IT software products in the agency.
- Transitioning USA Performance to online capabilities from a paper-based performance management process.

In most cases, when the OCIO is able to save funds within a single fiscal year, we are able to reinvest those costs savings into IT modernization efforts such as:

- Launching OPM's primary cloud implementation.
- Conducting an application rationalization analysis of OPM's existing applications to determine the IT modernization path.
- Replacing end of life and end of service network equipment.
- Competing and awarding key contracts for advanced technology implementations and for IT governance and project management.

**6. What role does OPM play in helping federal agencies build up a federal cyber workforce? What resources does OPM offer agencies on this critical issue?**

OPM provides on-going support to agencies by providing critical workforce planning data for agencies to benchmark and better understand where interventions may be needed to support recruitment efforts, which includes providing the community specific data for the Cyber Career

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Pathways Tool. OPM enabled a function to allow agencies to tag jobs with the cybersecurity National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) work role codes through USAJOBS and USA Staffing. This change makes it easier for applicants to search for cybersecurity jobs through our search API and URLs leading to the search queries. OPM works closely with agencies on the implementation of the Federal Cybersecurity Workforce Assessment Act to code occupations with the NICE cybersecurity work roles and report to OPM on progress in closing gaps in their work roles of critical needs. OPM has conducted webinars, issued guidance, and worked closely with agency representatives to ensure that they are able to successfully meet these requirements.

OPM also developed hiring strategies to provide agencies with the tools necessary to meet their hiring needs. Specifically, OPM authorized a governmentwide Direct Hire Authority (DHA) for the following cybersecurity occupations:

**Cybersecurity and related positions** - Agencies may use this authority to fill the positions listed below nationwide.

Position Title	Series	Grade Level(s)
<b>Computer Engineers (Cybersecurity)</b>	GS-0854	12-15
<b>Computer Scientists (Cybersecurity)</b>	GS-1550	12-15
<b>Electronics Engineers (Cybersecurity)</b>	GS-0855	12-15
<b>*IT Cybersecurity Specialists</b>	GS-2210	12-15

In addition, OPM issued regulations that give agencies the authority to determine if the conditions to justify a broader DHA for Information Technology (IT) positions are fulfilled. These hiring flexibilities will greatly enhance the Government's ability to recruit needed IT/Cyber professionals. Leveraging DHA provides agencies with a strategic tool for attracting needed IT/Cyber talent.

7. **The problem of legacy federal IT systems is a frequent focus of this Subcommittee. What are OPM's most critical IT modernization needs and how much progress are you making in addressing them? Would it be helpful to include in the FITARA Scorecard a metric to specifically track agencies' progress in updating or eliminating their most critical legacy systems?**

We fully appreciate FITARA and the Subcommittee's focus on IT modernization. We also seek to improve the customers' experience, operations, and supportability of enterprise solutions. The following are a part of our IT Strategic Plan and will guide our focus in the near future:

- Continue implementing the cloud-first strategy.



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- Continue establishing an enterprise-wide approach to technology.
- Continue eliminating fragmentation.
- Continue aligning IT modernization and investments with core mission requirements.
- Enhance the customer's experience through IT modernization. Transform OPM's websites to provide a user-friendly and personalized experience.

A number of these initiatives are multi-year efforts. We are making progress in FY 2022.

The Subcommittee could consider modified or new metrics to assess the implementation of modern security practices, the use of cloud technologies, modern IT software, and the use of effective IT portfolio practices such as the implementation of Technology Business Management.